

LIBRARY REPORT

Prepared by

The Loyola Student's Association

January, 1975

The University Library is the principle measure of the academic value of the University. It is created for the specific function of collecting, organizing, preserving, and disseminating information. This information should not only take the form of printed material but all possible sources of information which might facilitate the education and research of those who use it. The whole education process gravitates around the library's ability and potential to enable faculty and students to conduct their research as efficiently and completely as possible.

There are many problems and difficulties which hinder the accomplishment of this primary goal present in the Vanier Library of Concordia University. It is these problems and difficulties which I will examine in this research report and I will propose some possible solutions which might be implemented to rectify the present situation and to help in the future to maintain the necessary high standard of efficiency to make the Library the cornerstone of the University foundation which it should be.

The first and primary concern is the financing of the Library. The 'Bland Report' contained in Financing Higher Education in Canada, and the 'Downs Report' contained in Resources of Canadian Academic and Research Libraries, both done under the auspices of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, recommend that 10% (1) of the institutional operating budget should be the minimum for the ordinary operation and development of established libraries. This is simply not the case at Loyola. For the period ending June 30, 1972, the expenses incurred by the Library were \$282,932.00, representing three and one-fifth percent of the \$8,932,470.00 spent on operating the College. (2) In 1973, the Library expense was \$483,969.00, or 4 and two-fifths percent of the \$10,919,691.00 spent on operating the College. (3) For the period ending June 30, 1974, the Library expense was \$740,591.00, or five and one-half percent of the \$13,339,877.00 spent on operating the College, (4) books and periodicals accounting for only two and one-fifth percent of the total operating expenses of the College. (5)

This can be compared with the Library expenses of Sir George Williams University during 1973-74 which amounted to \$1,827,538.00, (6) representing approximately seven and one-fifth percent of total expenses. If the full-time enrollment at Loyola is considered to be approximately 6000 students * then the average expenditure per student is only \$123.43 which is well below the actual national average for Canadian universities, \$259.00 per full-time student. (7)

As we have just noted the percentage spent at Loyola on its Library falls far short of the recommended standard of ten percent which has been adopted by both the Library Board of Loyola and the Loyola Senate. (8) (9) Each year that sufficient funds are not allocated to the Library further deteriorates the Library's ability to fulfill its functions. To eventually bring the Library back to its proper level of efficiency a percentage higher than ten percent must be spent in successive years to remedy the situation.

* Actual enrollment is 5993 according to Concordia University statistics for 1974-75.

It is interesting to note that while the Athletic Complex has an estimated value of \$1.4 million (10), the Vanier Library is only valued at \$826,586.00. (11) In 1973-74, the Vanier Library received \$342.00 worth of additions, while during the same period the Athletic Complex received \$5,104.00 worth of additions. (12) I would not like to imply that the Athletic Complex is not a necessary or valuable asset for a university but nevertheless the Library is a much more needed and essential institution for a university. Therefore the funds allocated for the building and its improvements should reflect this fact. The library should be at least double the value of the Athletic Complex as it is the single most important element of any educational institution.

There are funds available to be spent on new fences, a new football field, and renovations for Father Graham's office, but there is no money presently available for the purchase of books or for renovating the Library. The financial priorities of the College have clearly been misplaced.

While financial difficulties are a very important part of the overall problem, there are also many other inherent disabilities in the library which must be examined and remedied.

The actual size of the building is important. The Vanier Library has a floor space of approximately 48,000 square feet. According to the standards laid down by the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries published in Trends for the Seventies (13) there should be sixteen square feet per full-time student which means that the Vanier Library could not properly serve anymore than 2,970 students. The present enrollment at Loyola is at least twice this amount. Furthermore, the recommended standard for the number of volumes an undergraduate library should contain is 75 volumes per full-time student, with an annual increase of 5 volumes per student per year.

The actual national average of 108 Canadian universities was 78.4 volumes per full-time student (14) in 1971-72. As of December 18, 1974, Vanier had approximately 205,000 books, not all of which are available for use because of the size limitations of the building, which gives an average of 34 volumes per full-time student assuming an enrollment of 6000 students. If the recommended standards were followed, the Library would have to contain at least 450,000 volumes.

The noise problem at the Library is acute. This is due to the overcrowding of the building, the physical lay-out of the building, and the students themselves. The first factor, the size of the building, can only be remedied by building an entirely new library or an extension to the present facilities. This would require a substantial capital investment. But the lay-out of the building and the attitude of the people who use it could be improved without having to spend a lot of money.

There are too many openings between the various sections of the Library. The circulation, cataloguing and classification, administration offices, and copying areas should be partitioned from the rest of the Library by more than just bookcases. There should be glass walls constructed to stop the flow of noise from these areas into the reference area, study areas, and the stacks. The various study areas should be isolated one from the other to prevent the transfer of noise from one to the other. The great opening between the first and second floor is a primary avenue for the transfer of noise; wherever possible this cavity within the building should be sound-proofed to prevent the noise from carrying as far as it does mainly because all the walls and ceilings are made of concrete and floors are not carpeted which conditions facilitate the flow of noise throughout the building. The stairwells should likewise be enclosed as much as possible to lessen the noise flow.

The basement is potentially the quietest floor of the Library. Therefore, this advantage should be exploited by using it primarily as a study area where silence is essential. Some of the stacks now on this floor could be moved upstairs to make room for more study areas. Various zones of silence could be established within the Library, the basement being the ultimate in silence, and the top two floors as quiet as possible where some quiet discussion would be tolerated. To make these proposals feasible, the ventilation, climate control and lighting of the building would have to be improved to make these various partitioned areas comfortable to work in.

The students themselves are to blame to some extent for the noise. The Vanier Library is used by many as a social club. Many students come to the Library to talk and to meet their friends. This practice should be rigourously discouraged. There should be a limited number of tables; most of the work space should take the form of cubicles - not the metal ones which are now in use because they in themselves are a source of noise - but wooden ones which would be quieter.

If students wish to talk for whatever reason, they should either leave the building or be encouraged to rent the seminar rooms located on the top and basement floors. Smoking, drinking, and eating should be strictly limited to the student lounge in the basement or in the specific case of smoking, tolerated only in well-defined areas reserved specifically as smoking areas where students may smoke and work, but not smoke and socialize. There should be a security system and student security patrols at least as efficient as the one used in the Campus Centre. Marcel Danis, legal aid concillor in charge of student court has stated that if the student court was formally approached by the Library, it would prosecute any offenders of library regulations.

At present, any student can independently lodge a complaint in student court against another student for disturbing the peace in the library but if the library itself were to lay the complaints, the effectiveness of the student court to enforce library regulations would be greatly increased.

At the present time students may borrow 5 books for a period of two weeks. If no one requests the books during the two-week period, the books may be renewed for another two weeks. Faculty members may borrow ten books for a period of one month. The faculty should be subject to the same regulations as the students, or the students should have the same privileges as the faculty. The students are equally entitled to the use of the books so there should be no discrimination on this account. Because of the shortage of books, no one should be allowed to take a book out of the Library for any more than two weeks without having it renewed.

Another area of discrimination between faculty and students is the fact that faculty members do not pay overdue fines on books despite the motion adopted by the Senate (15) calling for faculty members to pay fines on overdue books. I personally believe that fines for faculty members should be greater than those for students because faculty should in principle be more responsible than students and should be setting a good example for students to follow. Nevertheless, if faculty do not have to pay fines, then no one should have to pay overdue book fines.

Another major problem is the theft of books. The security arrangements and precautions now taken are not sufficient. Although the technology is now available to magnetically code books, and to electronically monitor the exits of the Library which could reduce losses by eighty or ninety percent (16), the cost of such a system would be prohibitive. But, if all persons were required to check their coats and briefcases before entering into the study areas, the ability to conceal books would be greatly reduced and thefts would be much more difficult to perpetrate than now is the case. An extra guard would be needed to supervise the checkroom but his salary would probably be offset by the reduction in the number of stolen books.

Admittance to the Library, due to the already overcrowded conditions, should be restricted to university students or faculty. No one without a valid I.D. should be allowed in, and this could be accomplished by having the same guard who supervises the exist turnstiles check I.D.s before allowing persons entry. Furthermore, because of lack of space, during examination periods, only Concordia students should be allowed to use the Library during its peak usage hours. The Library, or portions of it, should be left open twenty-fours hours a day during these

periods to allow students to work around the clock to prepare for their examinations.

There is a definite lack of general information available to persons wishing to use the Library. There should be several floor-plans located at strategic spots in the building indicating the general lay-out, the placement of material, and the work space available. Procedures for finding books and audio-visual material and taking them out should be posted at several locations particularly in the index area. It is not enough to have this information listed in the library handbook; it should be in full view of all persons interested in using the library so they cannot help but see it. The cards that must be filled out to borrow books should be put in several areas to avoid congestion at the front desk of people having to fill them out there. The more thoroughly students are made aware of procedures, the more efficiently they can use the Library which as a result will be able to serve them better.

Most of the problems of the Vanier Library are related to its financial limitations, resulting in many small annoyances such as a lack of water fountains on all floors. In itself, the problem is not that important but when you consider that to quench your thirst in the Library you must use either a drink machine which is often out of order and located in the basement or a water fountain which is located also in the basement and beside the urinals, it is certainly an inconvenience.

Another grievance is the rows of empty bookcases on the first floor, originally installed to hold new material. Because of the present freeze on library spending, they are not going to be filled for a while and the space they occupy is desperately needed for a study area. This wasted space is an insult to the students and faculty who are already faced with an overcrowded library. These minor inconveniences do hinder the development of the proper attitude necessary for a library.

Although there is much wrong with the Library, I have always found the staff to be helpful and willing to aid students to conduct their researches as efficiently and completely as the facilities allow.

NOTES

1. Report of the Library Board, 1972-73. Statement of Policies and Principles Concerning Loyola College Libraries, adopted by the Library Board, March 14, 1972 (and also adopted by the Senate, meeting March 29, 1973, motion #73026).
2. Loyola College Report and Financial Statements, June 30, 1972.
Touche Ross & Co., Montreal. Statement #3.
3. Loyola College Report and Financial Statements, June 30, 1973.
Touche Ross & Co., Montreal. Statement #3.
4. Loyola College Report and Financial Statements, June 30, 1974.
Touche Ross & Co., Montreal.
5. Same as Note #4. (Schedule of Expenses, page 1)
6. Sir George Williams University Report and Financial Statements,
May 31, 1974. Touche Ross & Co., Montreal.
7. Canada Year Book, Information Canada, 1973, p. 325.
8. As above, note #1.
9. Ibid.
10. As above, note #4.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. As above, note #1.
14. As above, note #7.
15. Senate, Meeting of April, 1973.
motion #73064:
 - It was moved by Mr. Princz, seconded by Mr. Boisvert, that faculty members will be held responsible for fines on overdue books and for the reimbursement against lost books, exactly on the same basis as student members are held responsible.
 - motion carried.
16. "Security System Cuts Loss in Library" Educational Digest,
December, 1974, p. 1.